

Claims

1. A switch comprising an outer housing and an inner component; switch means operable to provide a signal upon depression of said outer housing; resilient biasing means located between the inner component and the outer housing to provide a force which biases the outer housing from the inner component; and means for varying the spacing between the inner component and the outer housing and hence the biasing force provided by said resilient biasing means.

2. A switch according to Claim 1, comprising a base having an inner retaining member upstanding therefrom.

3. A switch according to Claim 2, wherein the inner component is mounted on and movable with respect to the inner retaining member.

4. A switch according to Claim 2, wherein the inner component has a threaded inner surface which is screw-threadedly engageable with a threaded outer surface portion of the inner retaining member.

5. A switch according to Claim 4, wherein the spacing varying means comprises the threaded inner surface of the inner component and the threaded outer surface of said inner retaining member.

6. A switch according to Claim 1, wherein rotation of the outer housing causes the biasing force provided by said resilient biasing means to vary.

7. A switch according to Claim 6, wherein the inner component rotates with the outer housing.

8. A switch according to Claim 6, wherein the inner component comprises a plurality of laterally extending (preferably laterally outwardly extending) tabs or lugs locatable in respective longitudinal grooves formed in an inside lateral surface of said outer housing.

9. A switch according to Claim 8, wherein the grooves permit longitudinal movement of the tabs or lugs to allow depression of the outer housing to cause operation of the switch means.

10. A switch according to Claim 3, wherein the base has an outer retaining member upstanding therefrom, the outer retaining member having a transversely extending flange against which a transversely extending flange of the outer housing can abut to resist decoupling of the outer housing from the base.

11. A switch according to Claim 1, wherein the resilient biasing means comprises a spring.

12. A switch according to Claim 1, wherein the switch is substantially circular.

13. A switch according to Claim 3, wherein variation in the spacing of the outer housing and inner component is accomplished whilst maintaining a substantially constant spacing between the outer housing and the base.

14. Use of a switch according to Claim 1 connected as an item selection tool for a computer system.

15. A switch for a computer system, the switch comprising:

- a base;
- a retaining member upstanding from the base;
- an inner component rotatably and screw-threadedly engaged with the retaining member;
- an outer housing connected for rotational movement with the inner component;
- resilient biasing means provided between the outer housing and inner component to bias one from the other; and
- switch means operable to provide a signal upon depression of said outer housing;
- the arrangement being such that rotation of the outer housing causes the spacing between the inner component and the outer housing and hence the biasing force provided by said resilient biasing means to vary.